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Various radio stations
in Louisiana:

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SENATOR LONG COMMENTS ON SPY PLANE INCIDENT

Senator Russell B. Long, by tape recording, over various radio stations in Louisiana

COMMENTATOR: "Senator, this past week, probably the most important subject on the national scene was the supposedly shooting down of an American plane by the Russians. May we have your comments on that, sir?"

SEN. LONG: "I don't know whether they shot it down or brought it down with a missile or whether the plane just ran out of oxygen in the high altitudes and had to come down, but, in any event, they have an American pilot there and they have the remains of an American plane that this boy was flying. The fact of the matter is that a lot of us have reason to believe, not by virtue of it having been given to us officially but by having heard informally or having heard rumors about it, that this country was sending planes behind the Iron Curtain. Those planes were unarmed and the purpose was to get information that we would need in the event that the Soviet Union decided to attack the United States.

"Now, as you know, this country is so wide open and so are most of the free world countries that it is very easy for Russia or anybody else to get all the information they need to know about where our defense installations are and where our Army bases are, where our cities are, where our major industries are. For the most part, they can get it just by request, with the Chamber of Commerce and get the information; but, in their country, they maintain that Iron Curtain and try to maintain such excessive secrecy that we have not been able to find out for certain about a great number of things we would have to know about the Soviet Union in the event that we were forced to go to war with them. Now, you know and I know that we are not planning to start a war with anybody, but if war is forced upon us and all these long-range missiles are exploded upon our country and our people are killed by the tens of millions, perhaps half of them killed in a single day, we would have to know how to go about getting back. Now if we couldn't get the information any better way, then I suppose the only thing to do was to do what we have been doing and, while it is too bad that they shot this boy down and we would just as soon that they didn't have the proof of it that we had been getting the information in the way that we have been getting it, I would a lot rather have done that than not to have the information. Now, there will be some problems about that in the future.

"I think the biggest asset about it is that we have been getting away with it for four years and I think we have Russia pretty well photographed from the air and we know where most of their things are right now. They tell us that in a year or so we ought to have a space satellite developed which will circle in outer space and give us the same information we are looking for without coming quite as close to the Soviet Union. But, as a practical matter, what real difference does it make whether you are taking the pictures from a space satellite a hundred miles up or from an airplane that is 15 miles up? It's still the same principle. You need to know what is behind that Iron Curtain and we are finding it out the best way that we can."

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